

State Commission

The Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism oversees almost \$4 million in grants distributed to service programs and activities throughout Maryland, including 18 grants in the 2014-2015 year. These grants funded more than 1,000 AmeriCorps members at more than 370 sites in Maryland. In addition, the Commission oversees seven grants for volunteer connector organizations and 10 mini-grants for service events through the Volunteer Generation Fund. The mini-grants supported events that commemorated the September 11 Day of Service and Remembrance or were geared towards participation in Maryland's Day to Serve. In all, Volunteer Generation Fund grantees leveraged 15,666 volunteers, among whom 7,100 were new volunteers.

AmeriCorps State

Community Art Collaborative at the Maryland Institute College of Art provides educational afterschool and summer art programming to more than 1,630 K-12 students in Baltimore City. The programs create a positive learning environment and promote community engagement. In 2014 through 2015, 14 AmeriCorps members collaborated with partners, such as the Baltimore Museum of Art, National Aquarium, and Baltimore Robotics Center to facilitate 86 community projects. Additionally, members leveraged 664 volunteers, developed 68 community partnerships, and raised \$39,000 in donations and grants to support service activities. Students displayed their accomplishments at a community festival that included free arts-based learning activities and youth performances. The civil unrest in Baltimore caused cancellation of many events and field trips, but CAC-affiliated artists and organizations reframed the dialogue to foster community healing through art related to the unrest and annual Boundary Block Party. AmeriCorps members gain valuable knowledge about community engagement, grant writing, and race and privilege through in-service trainings, and explore their personal commitment to a life of service.

Community Mediation Corps supports communities that use conflict mediation to improve their conditions. Through the program, 21 AmeriCorps members provide mediation and case management, coordinate volunteers, and strengthen partnerships in 10 counties. AmeriCorps members serve in schools and prisoner re-entry programs, and with veterans and military families. During the 2014-2015 service year, CMC began to notice a significant change in the culture of discipline at their school service sites. Rather than adhere to traditional disciplinary action, school administrators increased student referrals to mediation, further demonstrating the effectiveness of the program. In addition, after the Baltimore civil unrest, AmeriCorps members facilitated a community forum between students and police officers, giving participants the chance to discuss tough issues. Officers reported improved relationships with the students because of the forum, opening the door to planning for future mediations between officers and residents. AmeriCorps members engage in thought-provoking, experiential training. In addition, they become certified mediators, and gain presentation, project implementation, and teamwork skills.

AmeriCorps VISTA

Strong City Baltimore, formerly known as Greater Homewood Community Corp., sponsors a statewide AmeriCorps VISTA project. During the past year, 35 VISTAs helped partner sites with 31 projects. Strong City Baltimore VISTA members' projects managed 1,030 volunteers who served 8,549 hours. They generated \$289,467 in cash and in-kind resources, and gave support to 5,667 youth and 65 veterans or military service members. Strong City Baltimore's projects included Crossroads Community Food Network, which provides programs that address business development and food insecurity. The Network presented 10 workshops to 27 program participants who learned skills to develop their businesses. VISTAs secured \$163,000 in grants, and 2,028 participants had better food security as a result of the Fresh Check program. VISTAs served the International Rescue Committee by supporting programs that gave 345 people job training. VISTAs supporting the SABES program, which had 251 students in its afterschool program. In the summer of 2015, 19 VISTA summer associates served Baltimore City with direct community service.

Food Recovery Network, in College Park, unites students at colleges and universities across the country to fight hunger and food waste by recovering surplus perishable food from campuses and surrounding communities that would otherwise go to waste, then donating it to impoverished Americans who need a meal. In addition to college campuses in Maryland, the Network has connected with 150 campuses across the nation. AmeriCorps VISTA members are supporting the Food Recovery Network by building the capacity of local student chapters, creating and strengthening sustainable partnerships with partner agencies, and developing resources to support the Network's anti-hunger efforts. The VISTAs created a database of the 242 hunger-fighting nonprofit partner agencies that receive the various chapters' recovered food. They developed materials and resources to help chapters be more sustainable and productive. An AmeriCorps VISTA member designed and launched the Network's first annual fall fundraiser, gaining previously-untapped donors from their extensive network of students. The fundraiser brought in about \$12,000. In total, the VISTAs have generated \$113,500 in cash and in-kind resources.

AmeriCorps NCCC

In partnership with The Maryland Out of School Time Network, an AmeriCorps NCCC team designed and led literacy and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities for children in grades K-3 in Baltimore's Weinberg Foundation libraries. The Network is a project of Baltimore's Safe and Sound Campaign, established in 2007 as a statewide initiative to increase the quantity and quality of out of school opportunities for youth. The NCCC team worked in four elementary schools with the Summer READS program. Each school had 10-40 students in attendance on any given day. AmeriCorps members worked with librarians to plan and deliver to the children literacy and science lessons that related to the program's theme of "Every Hero has a Story." Several partnering organizations came to the schools to lead exciting workshops for the children. NCCC Members assisted with these, and led extension activities after the workshop leaders left. Corps members also took care of food and recess, and made sure the children were always accounted for. Program like these give a boost to students as they go back to school and could have long lasting positive effects.

Blue Water Baltimore asked three AmeriCorps NCCC teams to help plant and maintain trees and shrubs and engage the public in the Mayor's Tree Baltimore initiative. The Initiative is helping create a tree canopy in Baltimore to improve water quality and help forests to regenerate naturally. Blue Water Baltimore's aims to restore the quality of Baltimore's rivers, streams, and harbor to foster a healthy environmental, strong economy, and thriving communities. The three NCCC teams planted over 1,000 trees in the Baltimore region. Members also tended another 7,000 trees and potted over 400 native plants. They canvassed the community, emphasizing the benefits of trees and plants. Members helped cleaned trash out of rivers and streams in the Baltimore area.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

Prince George's County ranks 17th out of 24 jurisdictions in the State of Maryland for the number of teen pregnancies according to the most recent "Kids Count" report (2013), published by the Annie E. Casey foundation. Although the County has seen an improvement in the last five years, at a rate of 24.2 per 1,000 teen births per year, a need exists to assist adolescent girls in developing goals, improving self-esteem and increasing academic success. Nine Foster Grandparent volunteers served as mentors and caregiver to the babies of 43 teenage girls at St. Ann's Home. The Foster Grandparents modeled proper parenting by holding, rocking, reading and singing to the babies. Each teenage mother was provided an assignment plan that outline her goals and objectives such as obtaining a GED or finding a job. Eighty-three percent of the mothers reached their goals.

Senior Corps RSVP

Baltimore County RSVP volunteers help county residents through a variety of services. Over 1,975 RSVP volunteers served both young and elderly residents. They mentored and tutored school-aged children, supported efforts to reduce food insecurity, gave instruction and staffed hotlines to increase health knowledge; and helped with income tax preparation. More than 830 volunteers taught more than 22,000 residents on issues related to general health, Alzheimer's disease, and SHIPP, and 89 volunteers helped 4,984 clients with income tax return preparation, which resulting in a \$670,650 return to the Baltimore County economy. Baltimore County RSVP serves veterans' family members thanks to 99 volunteers, and in turn, 179 veterans continue to serve our country as Baltimore County RSVP members.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

Senior Companion volunteers are serving Baltimore City through the Baltimore City Health Department and Southern Maryland through the Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee. The volunteers provide vital services that help frail and elderly people with daily living activities so that they maintain independent living. The Senior Companion volunteers offer companionship and services that include meal preparation, light housework, transportation, and assistance in scheduling appointments. The two programs have 113 Senior Companions who serve over 120 clients. In addition, 36 Senior Companions gave respite to sixty-five 65 caregivers who needed time to address their own needs. Every one of the caregivers reported feeling less stress, and a sense of relief, as a result of the respite Senior Companions gave them.

Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is investing \$1,833,360 to expand the impact of two nonprofits in Maryland. Nonprofits supported by the SIF are working to improve the social service delivery system and strengthen workforce development across the state. The SIF transforms lives by using evidence to find what works and make it work for more people. The SIF Classic and SIF Pay for Success programs harness the expertise of grant-making intermediaries to identify, evaluate and expand effective nonprofits that serve low-income communities.

Volunteer Generation Fund

With support from the Volunteer Generation Fund, Montgomery County Volunteer Center recruits volunteers to serve with community partners and contribute to annual Martin Luther King, Jr Day of Service activities. During the 2014-2015 year, the Center leveraged 3,625 new volunteers who contributed a total of 59,657 hours. Highlights include a discussion led by volunteers on leveraging skills-based volunteers at a Volunteer Generation Fund subgrantee meeting. In addition, the Center hosted a service activity based on the CNCS focus area of healthy futures. Volunteers assembled 400 "Snow Day Boxes" filled with non-perishable foods for older adult clients of Meals on Wheels. Volunteers also made 250 "Heart Health" bags and 233 Oral Kits for the African American Health Program. Overall, the Montgomery County Volunteer Center provided capacity building services to 149 organizations and 61 of those implemented effective volunteer management practices.